

Whale Lessons

by Jane Flett

The ocean is a big place but after a while even your semisonic burbles will bounce back and find you.

An ocean is a big place, but it is not so big as space.

Even if your heart is as large as a small car, your tongue as heavy as two grown men—even then—you will have to carry it with you wherever you go.

Even after you die, there is a long way to fall: silently, suspenselessly, downwards, down.

After you're gone, the little guys who fled the shadow you cast will nibble upon the flesh of your bones.

Perhaps this is your chance to live again.

If you spend too long playing too close to the shore, you have only your greed to blame when your body is beached.

And is there any thought worse than being stranded on your belly, blushing, rotting in your own sack of skin?

The reason a beached whale dies is because their body collapses beneath the weight of itself.

The reason you get stuck sometimes is because the thing you are carrying round is so very heavy.

Maybe we'd all be better off floating.

It is easier to become a giant if there is something around to support

you: water for your muscles, suspension for your skin.

A house is sometimes just the place your self is suspended.

A home is sometimes a thing that can drift.

Maybe all we are all looking for is the echo of our own voice to prove that this isn't forever, to prove there's an end.

If you wait for long enough, mouth open, just moving in the direction your gravity pulls you, something will get caught in your teeth.

Or your gills, or your hooks, or your handbag, or anywhere you leave open to catch things.

You could be a huge thing, a whale, and live outside time.

You could be a mayfly.

You could reject all these lessons as just words in a world that has no need for words.

You could believe that whales do not ponder philosophy.

These are all options.

Maybe, even, we could take a trip together to the zoo and stand holding hands and watching the sea lions laughing at each other.

I could buy you a white chocolate chip ice cream and you could feed me some candyfloss and

everything could be high-hats and boom-tishes

everything could be easy

we could shut up about whales and trying to find some cod
philosophy

we could stop working and stop worrying

we could give up on i ching dice rolling fishing fodder tarot

we could find a well

and throw a coin down inside

and stay holding hands

and waiting

and listening

until, like a dead whale,

it hits

rock

bottom.

